

Nightingale Lane
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Campsbourne School

Head Teacher: Jonathan Smith

Wednesday 1st July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Like you, we are horrified by the death of George Floyd. We are keen that we do everything we can to ensure that the renewed momentum created by this event and the ensuing Black Lives Matter protests results in some meaningful change, and we have been reflecting on what this should mean for Campsbourne. We wanted to share with you some of the concrete measures we have already taken or are committed to undertaking.

We want to assure you that we commit to examining not just what we teach, but how we teach and how we operate more broadly as a school. We want to arm all our children with the skills and tools they need to talk about and understand these issues, to help and support each other and to thrive in the real world. There are also some areas where we will make changes which we hope will go some way to counteracting the negative impact that existing structures have.

Curriculum

We have recognised for some time that learning about “Black” history needs to go beyond “Black History Month” and we are conscious that the term “black” history itself is loaded. Last year we were proud to be part of celebrating the life of Emma Clarke. You can read our news feature on the special day on our website www.campsbourne.haringey.sch.uk Emma is thought to be the first British black female footballer, and through this we were able to enlist the help of Tony from [Black History Walks](#) who was able to help us make our curriculum, especially our history curriculum, more inclusive. This includes the following changes which were made last year as we redesigned the history curriculum:

Year 2 Unit on the history of Alexandra Palace – The children learn about the first black TV newsreaders in 1973 and the significance of this for the Black community. Children also learn how the Palace has been used by the Black community hosting Afro-Caribbean beauty shows and Black tap dancing groups.

Year 4 Unit on the Roman Empire - The children learn about Black Emperors of Rome, including Severus Septimius and his influence on Black History.

Year 5 unit on the Mayan Civilisation – Children learn about Luzia (Black Lady) who is believed to be the oldest inhabitant of America; her skeleton is thought to be around 12,000 years old and indicates that America was populated from West Africa in ancient times.

Year 6 unit on World War 2 – Children learn about the contribution of fighter pilots from the Caribbean during World War 2.



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We also believe it is important that children learn about the civil rights movement in the United Kingdom so that they understand this is a struggle that has happened on these shores and not just in America. We are therefore also in the process of updating our assembly program so that it reflects the history of the BAME community and the civil rights movement in the United Kingdom. For example, we are looking to include assemblies which introduce children to key figures from the civil rights movement including Paul Stephenson who led the Bristol Bus Protests and other campaigners such as Darcus Howe.

We have also more recently contacted [the Black Curriculum](#) and we are speaking to them next week about developing our wider curriculum. So, we have made a start in trying to examine and improve our curriculum but there is no doubt more that we can do and this will be a priority.

We are also giving thought to the books we have in school and have placed an order with a BAME specialist book shops, based in Brixton, which focuses solely on books with BAME characters. Unfortunately COVID has delayed the delivery of this order but we look forward to receiving them as soon as possible. This is not seen as a one off purchase but part of a wider strategy to increase the diversity of the school library over time.

Unconscious bias and talking about racial identity

Staff training

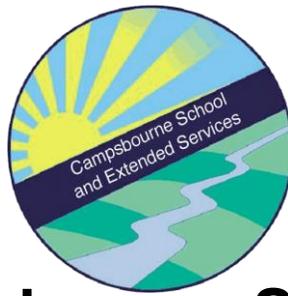
We all need to be mindful of our decision-making processes and any unintended consequences our biases may have. Although it may seem surprising, training on this is not something that is currently offered as a matter of course for schools, but we think that this is a priority in order to deliver real change and over the past few months we have been looking at how we might best deliver training on this topic to our staff. We're pleased to say that we have now found a provider for this training and we hope that we can put this in place early next term. We see this as a first step rather than a "quick fix" and we will continue to look for other ways in which we can address these issues in our school.

Talking with children

Many of you will have seen the first instalment of the powerful documentary "The School that Tried to End Racism" (Channel 4) in which a tailored programme for year 7 students to examine unconscious bias, and get them talking about racism, was deployed. We have been in contact with some of those involved in this programme to see if they can help us to find ways which we can map this across to our school, in an age appropriate way. We will continue to explore other avenues as well to think about how we can have open and meaningful conversations about racism with children at school. We are conscious that there are many practical and emotional issues to think about in this context, and we will need to work with parents to make this successful.



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Policies and Governance

At our last governors' meeting in June we committed to a full review of our school policies and procedures over the next few months to work towards addressing some of the systemic issues that may exist. We have already taken steps to ensure that our governing body is diverse but are looking at how we recruit new governors so that we can make the governing body even more representative. We will continue to consider ways in which we can keep this front of mind in the way the school is managed.

Talking about the Black Lives Matter movement with children

Many children will have questions about the news stories and conversations they have seen and heard over the past few weeks. In normal circumstances we no doubt would have held an assembly on the topic and talked about it in class, but of course we are unfortunately not functioning as normal at school at the moment. You may find [this guide](#), which we know has also been shared by Campsbourne parents through other channels, helpful when having conversations at home. At the back you will see that it references a whole host of other resources for children of all ages and adults. We have shared this with staff as well so that they can support discussions which may come up at school.

We know that there is a lot to be done and this is something we see as an ongoing process which will need to be kept under review. We welcome your views and questions on this and are open to an honest and frank conversations. If you would like to speak about this please contact our Chair of Governors Elli (eleonor_ley3@hotmail.com) copying Anita Jakhu (anita.jakhu@gmail.com), who is an associate governor responsible for overseeing provision for our BAME community, so that we can arrange this.

With kind regards

Jonathan Smith (Head teacher)
Elli Jones (Chair of Governors)

